official purpose can avail of the benefit of free journey for his or her personal journeys?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) Yes, Sir. It is a common practice for airlines world over to offer free-tickets for journeys under various schemes. Air India, Indian Airlines and Jet Airways etc. have also been offering free incentive tickets on domestic as well as international routes under their incentive schemes.

(b) and (c) There is no objection to availing of such free tickets earned under various schemes offered by the airlines, by any person travelling for official purpose out of Government funds.

Government officials can also accept the free tickets earned by them under such incentive schemes offered by any airline except in the case of "Free Companion Scheme", the availing of the facility is confined to national Carriers only.

High cost of domestic air travelling

4237. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that air travel from Delhi to Singapore and Hong Kong and other foreign destinations is cheaper than air travel in domestic circuit like Delhi to Trivandrum etc., which is affecting domestic tourism;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the measures taken/proposed to be taken to reduce the cost of domestic air travel;

(c) whether it is a fact that high rate of excise duty on aviation fuel is contributing to high cost of domestic travel;and

(d) if so, whether Government propose to reduce excise duty so as to reduce the cost of domestic air travel?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) to (d) Domestic air fares are not regulated by the Government. However, Domestic air fares on some sectors are high as compared to international fares due to short haul flights, more number of landings, Route Dispersal Guidelines, higher price of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) and high rate of Sales Tax on ATF levied by the State Governments.